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EDITORIAL

PERFECTION, in the technical sense in which we use the term when we speak of being bound to seek perfection, is the fullest possible realization of the spiritual potentialities of the individual person under the power of God's grace: *be ye also perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*. All baptized persons, whatever their particular status or vocation may be, are bound to have this perfection as their ultimate aim. It is of course an aim that can only be completely realized by the possession of God in the Beatific vision, which is the object of the virtue of hope and for which every human being has been created.

When we speak of being bound to perfection we are thinking as a rule, and sometimes thinking exclusively, of those who have entered the religious state; here again the term is a technical one and does not or should not contain the implication that others are not living a religious life or that their obligations are in any way less religious, though they may be different. Religious, in the technical sense, have placed themselves in the *state* of perfection by taking the vows of religion; poverty, chastity and obedience. They have undertaken, that is, to realize this perfection in a *particular* way, through the observance of their vows and through their life in community. By these they lay aside the more ordinary ways of serving God in the world, including the married state (to the carrying into effect of which, nevertheless, God has appointed what he has not done for religious, a special sacrament, with its own particular graces).

In one sense the religious state (together with the episcopate) is a higher mode of life than any other vocation, to the extent that its sacrifices and duties are such as to tend, of their very nature, to concentrate attention on the things of God, whereas the sacrifices demanded for the true service of God in other vocations are neither so easily perceived as being God's will, nor do they lead so directly to preoccupation with the things of God. For this reason God calls men and women to the religious life or to the priesthood in far less numbers than he does to avocations by which they may serve him in the material concerns of the life of the world. This is in the very nature of things, for the life of the world would cease altogether if it were not so.

It would be a great mistake therefore, yet it is a mistake often unconsciously made, to think of vocations other than to the religious life and the priesthood, as a *second best*. Every vocation is a primary vocation, in as much as it is God's special call to that particular person, and no vocation could be in any sense a second best unless it were entered upon in spite of a clear call from God to the religious life, the priesthood or some other vocation in its very nature higher than the one actually undertaken.

It would also be a great mistake to imagine that the subject matter of the vows of religion has no particular relevance to the life of other baptized persons, lay people called to follow Christ. Every follower of Christ is bound to obedience to God's law and will, and under God to his diocesan bishop, to the supreme jurisdiction of the Pope, and to the just laws of the land. Children are bound to obey their parents, and adults their lawful superiors in so far as they are under contract to do so. Every Christian is bound to be chaste; within marriage there is a marital chastity that must be observed. Every Christian too is bound to that poverty of spirit which must control and sanctify the ownership of all material things.

With these thoughts in view we have decided to devote the next four numbers of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, with the exception of the January number which will be as usual a Unity number, to the general theme of Religious life. The articles in them will be on the Religious Vows, on doctrine, and on prayer, treated in such a way as to engage the interest of lay people and religious equally. There will also be a series on Secular Institutes, their nature and work.

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As we go to press the news is broadcast of the death of our Holy Father Pope Pius XII. We join with the whole Catholic world, and with countless others who are not Catholics, in expressing deep reverence for his person and sorrow at our loss, and in praying for the repose of his soul. He will be held in honour as one of the greatest of modern popes for the loving care and wisdom with which he governed the Church during his long pontificate.—R.I.P.



THE VOWS OF RELIGION I.—OBEDIENCE

COLUMBA RYAN, O.P.

MEN and women in religious congregations are traditionally spoken of as occupying a state. By this we mean a permanent status to which they are tied for some fixed period, usually for life. It is by the three vows of religion that they are established in this state. And so the vows tend to be thought of absolutely as what make religious what they are. There is a danger in this way of thinking of them, as if they were something in their own right, for their own sakes. It can be forgotten that the vows are only a means to an end, and have always to do with what is vowed. One comes on queerly used distinctions between, for example, the vow and the virtue of obedience, as if the thing known as religious obedience under vow was something quite different from the virtue of obedience. One even comes on treatments of the subject that lead one to imagine that, for religious at any rate, there are certain obligations arising from the vow of obedience, after fulfilling which they may, if they like, go on to the practice of the virtue. All this is a queerly muddled use of perfectly legitimate distinctions. For this reason it may be useful, in the four articles of this series, to attempt a loosening up of our ideas about the vows, and a setting of the vows in the context of religious life as a whole. So I shall deal quite simply with the place of obedience in human and Christian life before going on to the difference that is made by taking a vow concerning it. And in the same way I shall deal with the role of chastity and poverty in Christian life before dealing specifically with the vows made about them. After all, a vow is quite simply a promise made to God, and promises are 'to do something', and one cannot talk sensibly about particular promises if one does not know anything very much about the things one is promising. When St Thomas treats of religious life in the *Summa Theologica* he very sensibly deals first with the question whether religious ought to practise poverty, chastity and obedience before he goes on to ask about their taking vows concerning them. (II-II, 186.) The vows establish religious in a permanent state of practising these counsels; but it would have been perfectly possible for no such state to have been established and still men and women could have given themselves to such practices from day to day.

Obedience is part of every man's life. It governs the personal relationship that ought to exist between him and his superiors. It is easy to fall into thinking of obedience as submission to laws and regulations. Primarily, it is not this. We do not obey an abstract code of laws, we obey *people*. Law has its essential place, but it is not as the object of obedience. Obedience is given to people and their commands, is given to the will of the superior. Law must direct this will and command (otherwise they become arbitrary impositions) but it is the will and the command that we submit to in obedience.

The very words (*obaudire*, and its Greek and Hebrew equivalents), with their etymological suggestion of 'hearkening to' 'giving ear to' suggest this personal quality of obedience. Holy Scripture inculcates throughout a personal obedience to God; and even in places where the Law is most to the fore it is seen predominantly as the commands of God, the will of God, the testimonies of God. Our Lord, the model of Christian obedience, obeys his *Father*, does his *Father's will*, enjoins upon his followers to do '*my commandments*'. And it is in perfect keeping with this Scriptural approach that religious profession is made in the form of promising obedience to superiors rather than to rules.¹

The same personal quality of obedience is attested by the whole way in which St Thomas treats of it in the *Summa*. He deals with it in the context of justice, of the virtue precisely which regulates men in their personal relationships, ensuring that to everyone is given what is his due. There are some relationships in which what is due to a person cannot exactly be given. The creature cannot give God his full due, neither can the child his parents; in these cases there is no way of fully paying back what has been given. These relationships are regulated therefore not by justice in the full sense, but the one by religion, the other by piety. So also, in the special relationship of subject to superior, there can be no precise allotment of what is due, and St Thomas assigns the regulation of this relationship to *observantia*, a virtue of knowing how and when to pay fitting respect. This virtue of 'respectfulness' has two kinds of virtue contained under it, the one '*dulia*' (which

¹ In the Dominican form of profession, in which the subject places his hands within those of his Superior in a feudal gesture of allegiance, the personal bond contracted is admirably underlined.

knows how to pay honour where honour is due), the other *obedience*. Thus obedience is set fully and squarely in the context of the virtues that regulate personal relationships of one kind or another. (II-II, 80-104.)

The particular business of obedience is to submit the subject to the commands of the superior. There are two reasons for such subjection, one much more fundamental than the other. The fundamental reason is the whole order and hierarchy of all that is; things are not created all on a dead level, nor do they stand on an equality with their Creator. All through we have to recognize the higher and the lower, the greater and the less, the source of influence and the recipient of it. And 'in human affairs', says St Thomas, 'the way in which superiors influence those below them is by their wills. . . . To impel by reason and will is to give commands.' (II-II, 104, 1.) 'The divine will is the first rule by which the wills of all rational creatures are regulated. And following an order divinely appointed these created wills are closer to or further from the divine will. So the will of one who gives orders can be a kind of secondary rule for the will of one who obeys' (ibid. ad 2). The fundamental reason why men have to obey lies in the sheer authority of God. In the words of the Psalmist: 'Come and see the works of God; who is terrible in his counsels over the sons of men. . . . Who by his power ruleth for ever' (Ps. 45). God claims by absolute right the obedience of men. We shall have to see later how one man can claim the obedience of another, and in what sense created wills are nearer one than another to God's will, so as to found this claim.

The less fundamental, but not unimportant, reason for the subjection of one will to another is that the subject has to learn from, be instructed by, the superior. (II-II, 186, 5.) The command of the superior in some measure has to inform the conscience of the subject; here again the superior's will becomes a rule for the will of the subject.

But a will can only provide a rule, only has the character of law and is regulative when it is the instrument of reason. Law is found in reasonableness (I-II, 90, 1). Things are not in the law simply because they have been willed by anybody, not even by God. They are in the law because they are right in reason. They are in the law of God not because God has arbitrarily willed them so, but because they are just right, just so, in the eternal wisdom.

It is true that the reason can only pass into effectiveness by bringing in the will (we all know the kind of person who knows what he ought to do but for lack of willing does not put it into action). Still, it is the reason which must decide, must give the orders, and if the will does take on the character of a rule, this is only when 'it is itself regulated by some reason. It is in this sense that the will of the ruler has the character of law. Otherwise his will would be not a law, but an injustice' (I-II, 90, 1 ad 3). The law must enter, not because obedience is subjection to law but because it is subjection to the will of another *according to* law. Law provides the framework within which obedience of one man to another may take place. Without law a man's will acts blindly, and its imposition is tyranny; outside the law there is no scope for obedience.

Law is not opposed to freedom. The rather prevalent assumption that to accept law is to accept (however necessarily) a restraint and curtailment of our natural freedom arises from that fragmentary view of human nature which took possession of western minds from about the sixteenth century, according to which man in a state of pure nature is an animal with naturally free instincts, ignoble or noble according to your realist or romantic viewpoint; his freedom is the untrammelled play of these instincts, and reason, laying the fetters of law upon him, only comes in from outside, somehow alien to his nature. But in a greater tradition of Christian and pre-Christian thought, reason was not seen as alien to his nature. It was seen as an integral part of his nature, growing up from within, the very principle of truly human living and fulfilment. A man's freedom was found in the fullest possible development of the responsibility and self-mastery that this possession and use of reason gave him. Law, far from being a fetter laid upon him, was his reason's formulation of the rules which he discovered within his own nature, and which he could implement for its complete fulfilment. Law was the instrument of his freedom.

There are two kinds of law, natural law, and positive law. For anything to be used and developed to its fullest possibilities it must be used according to its nature, its make-up. One cannot, for example, effectively use the nib of a fountain pen for unscrewing small screws; at best it will prove ineffective, at worst it will break. Its make-up sets the rules for its use, and if the manufacturer

draws up a list of rules these ought not to be arbitrary 'fiats' prescribed by whim but the expression of what is fixed by its nature. The same is true of human nature, but with important differences. Fully to realize his possibilities man must act in keeping with his nature. But his nature includes being reasonable. And more than this, the very fact of being endowed with reason and will puts him in a position in the following out of his rules which is held by no other material creature. He, and he alone, is not blindly impelled to follow his rules. He alone both takes conscious cognizance of them, discovers them for himself, and has the power to frustrate or fulfil them as he will. In this sense he has a responsible share in the legislation for his nature; within limitations, he is his own lawmaker. Even though God, his maker, may give him a code of rules (the Ten Commandments) like the manufacturer printing his rules for use, these are only the formulation of what is already built-in to his nature and what he can in principle discover for himself. His own conscience bears witness to the natural law within him. His is a responsible personality.

But he has need of positive law too. Within the framework fixed by the natural law, there are alternatives of conduct not fixed by his nature, and yet requiring to be decided one way or another if he is to achieve fulfilment. His nature demands some decision but does not fix which. It is the function of positive law to make these decisions. If men existed entirely on their own such decisions could be taken by each man for himself; but in loneliness a man can neither come into being nor reach the full development of his powers. His nature demands that he live in society, and positive law has to be made for society as a whole. This entails the acceptance by men in society of a legislative authority, and of an executive by which such laws shall be brought to bear. Such acceptance does not involve the curtailment of the individual's freedom any more than does his recognition of natural law. Rather it is an acceptance by which he provides for his freedom, an acceptance that comes from a reasoned working out of what is required for the fulfilment of his personality within society. This acceptance of positive law, and of an executive to which obedience is voluntarily given, is in fact an expression of the 'charity' of a society, an expression of the consideration to be shown by every member of the society to every other member.

For if there were no rulings made to fill the gaps left by natural law life in society would become impossible. The rulings are made, the positive law is established for the common good, meaning by this not some monolithic achievement to which the interests of individuals must be sacrificed, but that further fulfilment of their human personalities which is alone possible within the structure of society. It should never be forgotten that the business of society and of authority in society is always to promote the fullest development possible of the persons in society; it exists for them, not they for it.

We may now return to the obedience which is exercised within the framework of law, and solve one problem left earlier without an answer. Our consideration of law has shown us in what sense one human will may be set over another, or, as St Thomas put it, be nearer the will of God than another. It is because society demands authority, and this demand comes from the divinely appointed social nature of man. But whereas God by his sheer eminence occupies the highest office of authority, one man only has eminence over another by reason of being entrusted with an office of authority (his title to office being established either by appointment of God, or by enactment of positive law). In either case, however, the subject is bound to obey, both by reason of the fact of authority, and because thereby he receives instruction in his own and the common good. The fact of authority requires that he obey simply because he is told, not because of any judgment that he may pass upon the expediency of what he is told. And yet this does not destroy his free responsibility, nor does it give unlimited scope to any human superior. It does not give unlimited scope to human authority, because the will of a superior only has the character of law for the subject so long as it remains itself within the law. As soon as it oversteps that framework or acts outside the area limited for it by lawful appointment, it ceases to have any claim on the obedience of the subject. And the subject's free responsibility is not destroyed. 'God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel' (Ecclus. xv, 14), and St Thomas comments upon this: 'not that man may do whatever he wants, but that he is not compelled to do what has to be done by any compulsion of nature . . . but by free choice coming from his own counsel. And just as he ought to do everything else that has to be done at his own counsel, so too

has he to obey his superiors.' He has to do what he is told because he is told, but he does this humanly on his own responsibility. His obedience is as free as every other practice of virtue. As much as in anything else, he must consult his own conscience to determine whether it is right for him to obey. In the last resort he remains his own lawmaker.

In all this we have been concerned with the purely human obligation of obedience. Under the Christian dispensation, within the body of Christ, the principles remain exactly the same. But they find a new and heightened sphere. God's authority is found incarnate in Christ. The personal relationship regulated by obedience is between Christ and the members of his mystical body who are subject to him; and the relationship is transfigured by Christian charity. Within the Body, men are appointed superiors by the authority of Christ. Positive law, the commands of the Church and those of superiors within the Church, becomes the expression not simply of the 'charity' of one man to another, but of the supernatural charity that binds one member to another. 'Purify your souls in the *obedience of charity*, with a brotherly love, from a sincere heart love one another earnestly' (I Peter i, 22).

The principles remain the same, their outcome is wholly Christianized. Obedience no longer remains a means to the perfect building up of the human personality, it becomes a means to Christian fulfilment that 'we may in all things grow up in him who is the head, even Christ' (Eph. iv, 15).

* * *

Obedience is a matter of the most delicate balancing of these various principles. If any one of them is lost sight of distortions inevitably result. Let its fundamentally personal context be forgotten and let it be supposed primarily to require submission to a code of law, and at once legalism results, either the legalism of the superior exacting conformity to the letter, or the legalism of the subject 'working to rule'. Let the superior for one moment suppose that his will alone is law, and his rule becomes to that extent an arbitrary imposition and injustice. Let the subject's human responsibility, the use of his own reason and will in obedience, be denied, and there results on the side of the superior a false paternalism and on the side of the subject infantilism. Let it be supposed that the aim of obedience is a 'common good' that is not the full development of each personality within the structure

of society but is instead the efficient management of a community, and there must result the evil of institutionalism.

It is only when the delicate balance and interplay of all the principles involved is observed that obedience restores the divine order and gives back to man, by integrating him within that order and instructing him in the law of God, the wholeness of personality that was his and was, by disobedience, lost.



THE RELIGIOUS VOWS AND THE HOLY WAR

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

IT was our Lord himself who taught us that it is holy to be poor and chaste and obedient. But even as he spoke, and indeed for many years before his time, other Jews had already realized this independently, and had been striving in their own ways to practise these very virtues. The descriptions of the sect known as the Essenes in the records of Josephus and Pliny the Younger, and especially the new discoveries at Qumrân, all bear striking witness to this fact. Where then did the idea originate that man can enter into closer union with God through poverty, chastity, and obedience? Clearly it was in the Old Testament, the common source on which our Lord and the Essenes both drew. And when we attempt to trace the idea back to its Old Testament roots, the trail leads us not, as we might have expected, to the temple, or to the altar, nor even, in the last analysis, to the vows of the Nazirites, but beyond this still further back to the remote nomadic past of ancient Israel, to what was probably one of the oldest of her traditions, the tradition of the Holy War.

In those early days, before the first kings, there was no standing army in Israel. When an enemy menaced her existence, her menfolk left their small possessions, segregated themselves from their wives, and lived together in camp under the leadership of a charismatic chief. It was under these circumstances that a form of poverty, chastity and obedience was practised for the first time. The earliest religious community was a community of warriors assembled in camp to do battle on behalf of the people of God.

At that stage in her history, Israel had hardly any natural resources with which to defend herself. And so her warriors strove to fill themselves with the holiness of the God who had made himself their own by the Covenant. They fought in his name, and needed no other strength. But to be filled with God's holiness a man must be ritually pure; above all he must have kept himself apart from his wife. Besides this he must remain day and night physically close to God, till he is steeped, body and soul, in holiness. And as long as he remains near God, his every action must be governed by God's will, made known through the charismatic leader.

Long after the Holy War in its fullest and truest sense had grown obsolete, this fundamental tradition survived. One of the most famous and striking illustrations of it is Uriah's rejoinder to David, who had recalled him to the royal palace at Jerusalem from the camp before Rabbath-Ammon. 'Have you not come from a journey?' asks David. 'Why then did you not go down to your house?' and Uriah answers, 'The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in booths, and my master, Joab, and my master's servants are encamped in the open field. Shall I then enter my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? By your life and by your living soul I shall not do such a thing.' (II Sam vi, 11.) It is the reply of a consecrated man. An Israelite (and here Uriah the Hittite speaks to all intents and purposes as an Israelite) thought of his wife, his house, his property as comprising the sphere of the 'profane', the natural world in which his everyday life was spent. It was, in its degree, under the blessing of God, but it was not 'perfect'—not in immediate contact with God himself. Now Uriah has passed from this 'profane' sphere of life into the sphere of holiness, from the mundane environment into the charismatic environment of the war-camp. Together with the other warriors he feels himself in a state of physical and palpable union with God. To turn back now from the holiness of the camp and to resume contact with the 'profane' sphere from which he has separated himself would be a desecration, a betrayal. The camp itself is a place of unique holiness, for God dwells and 'walks' there. 'For Yahweh, your God, walks in the midst of your camp, to protect you and drive your enemies before you. So let your camp be holy; let not God see anything repulsive in you, to turn him away from you' (Deut. xxiii, 15). This passage is all the more significant when it is realized that everywhere else in Deuteronomy

God is thought of as dwelling transcendentally in heaven.¹ Here, and here alone, in the context of the Holy War, does the Deuteronomist revert to the primitive idea of God walking through the camp and dwelling in the midst of his consecrated warriors.

In engaging himself to fight in the Holy War, it was not enough for the Israelite to separate himself physically from his wife and property. He had to banish the very thought of them from his heart. Part of the solemn ritual preparation for battle prescribed by Deuteronomy was for the scribes to proclaim before the assembled army that anyone who '... has built a new house and not yet dedicated it ... planted a vine and not yet harvested its first fruits ... espoused a bride and not yet taken her ...' (Deut. xx, 5-7) should leave the camp and return home. Such men might harbour secret longings for the old world they had relinquished, the ties of which, it might be supposed, would still be exceptionally strong in their case. And any longings of this kind might prove fatal. Misgivings, regrets, and backward glances at the old 'profane' sphere of life would weaken the union between God and his men, and diminish the flow of charismatic strength to the army as a whole. And so even in his inmost heart the Israelite cut himself off from the very thought of wife and children and property, his ordinary world, in order to become possessed by God for the Holy War. It seems to me that that remains fundamentally and eternally the significance of the religious state. It is a question of two spheres of life which must not be mixed. Men become poor and chaste and obedient in order to pass from the 'profane' sphere of the ordinary world, and to dwell in God's immediate presence in the war-camp, in order to be possessed by God for the Holy War.

If then the Israelite warrior willingly forsook for a time the chief natural goods which life could offer him, it was because his soul was suffused and inspired to the exclusion of all else by two elemental ideas: the holiness of God sustaining him, and the malice of the enemy before him. Again I suggest that every religious who has consecrated himself to God by poverty, chastity, and obedience must, in some form or other, be inspired and possessed by these two ideas. They belong to the elemental meaning of the religious state. Let us consider them a little more deeply.

¹ In the Deuteronomic tradition God is thought of as being present in Sion only through the medium of his 'Name'.

I. THE HOLINESS OF GOD

It seems almost certain that the Hebrew word for holiness, *qodesh*, originally meant 'separateness'. Whatever is consecrated to God must be separated from the profane as he is separate. Poverty and chastity are in that sense measures of separation, ways of participating in God's separateness from the profane. But to realize the significance of this root-meaning, it must be appreciated that at the very origins of the idea of holiness lies an intuition of the mystery and terror of God. It is the first impact upon man's conscious soul of God as *numinous*, 'Absolutely Other' to the world of creatures, and 'Absolutely Unapproachable' by it. 'Absolutely Other': Beyond and prior to any notion of God's goodness, or even of his power, is man's elemental awareness of him as '... a Mystery, inexpressible and above all creatures', evoking the mental reaction of '... *Stupor* ... blank wonder, an astonishment that strikes us dumb, amazement absolute'.² 'Absolutely Unapproachable': part of the same pre-conceptual intuition of holiness is a sense of utter baseness confronted with overwhelming sublimity. For man, the creature, to draw near to God the holy would be like a moth flying into the sun. Holiness shrivels up the profane, the 'common', the creaturely, the natural in its sheer radiant sublimity. It is 'like stored-up electricity, discharging itself upon anyone who comes too near'. It was holiness in this sense which struck Uzzah dead when he put out his hand to touch the ark (II Sam. vi, 7). If the sons of Aaron had seen the sanctuary 'even for a moment' they would have dropped dead. (Num. iv, 20.) Fire came forth from Yahweh and devoured the two hundred and fifty men who offered incense before him in defiance of Moses' command. And afterwards the son of Aaron was ordered to take up the censers and make them into a covering for the altar, because, sinfully as they had been used, they had been brought into the presence of God *and were charged with his holiness* '... for they offered them before Yahweh; therefore they are holy' (Num. xvi, 1-38).

It was because they were so conscious of, and so terrified by, these fearful and destructive aspects of the holiness of their God, that the Hebrew people so often (especially in their older tradi-

² R. Otto. *The Idea of the Holy*. (English Translation by J. W. Harvey), Oxford. 9th Impression, 1945.

tions and writings) depicted him as a furious, burning, jealous, and revengeful God, causing convulsions in the natural order by his very approach, and full of urgent vitality to destroy. This is in origin the nomad's idea of God. It was only later that the gentler aspects of the Divine Goodness became prominent. In Elias' vision of God, he saw a whirlwind, and an earthquake and fire before he heard the 'still small voice'. This might be regarded as an epitome of the deepening realization of God's attributes throughout the history of the people as a whole. And even in the second part of Isaias, where the Hebrew idea of God finds its most sublime and most developed expression, the author reverts again and again to the elemental concept of his sheer burning holiness.

Yet even as the *numinous* in God terrifies, so also it attracts. Man in his baseness longs for the unspeakable sublimity of holiness even as he trembles before it. The moth longs for the light-giving flame. And by the miracle of atonement God gives him the power to draw near and still to live. For this is, in essence, what atonement means: the miracle of being enabled to walk out of the profane world and into the holiness of God without being annihilated by it.

At the same time it cannot be too strongly emphasized that God lays down the conditions under which man may approach him. Only those whom he calls may draw near, and these only in the exact manner which he prescribes. This is the concept underlying the solemn rituals of purification and 'separation' with which priests prepared themselves for sacrifice, and warriors for the Holy War. Every detail prescribed must be meticulously obeyed. Every contaminating spot of the profane world without must be purged away. Above all the charismatic leader must be obeyed without question. The moment the people murmured against Moses and Aaron, the 'covering' sheltering effects of atonement were lost, and the holiness dwelling in their midst became a death-dealing plague (Num. xvi, 41-46). Religious obedience is nothing less than the meticulous observance of God's will and of the commands of his chosen leader, on the part of those who live in, and are charged with, the flaming radiance of his holiness.

That the Israelite warriors should have been able, through poverty, chastity, and obedience to dwell in the divine holiness

and be united to it was already therefore, in its degree, a miracle of atonement. They themselves became charged with 'numinous' force, one with the destroying sublimity of God. And it is because they thought of holiness as that which destroys and withers the profane, that they associated the state of holiness with war. Israel's war was *holy*. The strength in the warrior's arm and the courage in his heart was the holiness of God himself; it was God in him and with him, touching and annihilating the baseness of the gentiles with his numinous force.

It is vitally important not to lose the eternal truths which underlie these ancient images of God's destroying wrath. It is only the stupendous miracle of Christ that saves us from being withered up by the God who dwells so near to us and is so holy. What else is hell-fire except the unspeakable agony of being touched by God's holiness when one is cut off from Christ? Yet the miracle of atonement consists precisely in the fact that man does draw near to God, and the miracle of Christian atonement consists in the fact that man enters into divine sonship. Holiness, so terrible, rending, destroying without Christ, becomes 'through him, and with him, and in him', the loving and protecting Fatherhood of God. It is impossible to realize the wonder of being able to call God 'Father', without facing unflinchingly the fact that his holiness is *terrible*, and that it is only our union with Christ which saves us from its effects. But when the wonder of that fact seizes a man's soul, he will abandon at once, without a moment's regret, every natural good which the profane world can offer him. The real blessings which he surrenders by poverty, chastity, and obedience, fade into utter insignificance before the sublime joy of being possessed, body and soul, by the holiness of God.

II. THE MALICE OF THE ENEMY

No one at all familiar with the Old Testament can have failed to notice that it is pervaded from end to end with a sense of menace and peril from malignant enemies. 'Yahweh, how many are my enemies! Many are they that rise up against me!' (Ps. iii, 1.) Perhaps no theme in the Bible recurs more insistently than this one. Here again we touch upon the ancient traditions of the Holy War. The warrior's mind, as he waits in the camp under the shadow of God's protection, is filled with the thought of the enemy

before him. Active malignant forces have gathered to crush his people. Just as he is filled with the holiness of God, so they, dedicated as they are to false gods, are filled with the power of evil. In such circumstances the Israelite's whole attention is fixed on the battle. As long as the crisis lasts there is no room in his thoughts for the old world from which he has separated himself. But once the danger has passed and his vigilance relaxes, memories and longings for it will return. It is his intense awareness of the enemy confronting him which makes him for the moment of peril poor and chaste and obedient, separates him, that is to say, heart and mind, soul and strength from everything except the holiness of God.

Now let us turn for a moment from the early history of Israel to the latest phase, the era of intense Messianic expectation which ushered in the birth of Christ. Here again we encounter the phenomenon of poverty, chastity and obedience being practised by a band of men who have voluntarily chosen to live a communal life in segregation from the rest of the people. I refer of course to the Essenes. Again, what inspires them to these abnormal austerities is the sense of being engaged in a Holy War. They think of themselves primarily as warriors. This is to be the 'War between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness', the war of wars, the final overthrow of the powers of evil, and the beginning of a new age and a new world. They have been chosen as the 'Elect of the New Covenant'. What has happened in fact is that the ancient ideal of the Holy War has been revived and reformulated. It expresses itself now not in a limited historical context, but on a cosmic and eschatological scale. The last age of the world has come, and a remnant at least of the Chosen People has not been found unprepared. Their communal settlement is a camp of war. They are borne up by the sense of the approaching battle, and their minds and wills are directed outwards, away from the natural world, away from wives and houses and property and from all that normally constitutes a man's happiness. The sense of watchfulness and expectation possesses them to the exclusion of all else; it is intense enough now to carry them through their whole lives in poverty, chastity and obedience. The same sense of the imminence of war explains too the intense preoccupation with holiness, and therefore with ritual purity, which is the other main characteristic of the Qumrân

community. The menace of the enemy and the holiness of God are the two fundamental ideas which must pervade a man's soul if he is to be uncompromisingly poor and chaste and obedient. They are the inspiration of all religious of all ages.

It is almost superfluous to point out how these ideas survive and achieve a sublimer dimension in the New Testament. One thinks of our Lord's own warnings, uttered at the very end of his life. 'What I say to you, I say to all: Watch!' (Mark xiii, 37). 'Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation' (Mark xiv, 38). One remembers St Peter's 'Be ye sober and watch, for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour' (I Peter v, 8). One remembers that for St Paul faith, hope and charity are shield and breastplate and helmet (I Thess. v, 8; Eph. vi, 16, 17). More than ever must the Christian man see his life in terms of the Holy War. More than ever must he be filled with the consciousness of a malignant enemy before him, immensely powerful and filled with hatred for the holy people of God.

Clearly, however, merely to be aware of the enemy is not enough. He must be fought and crushed. Satan himself is now the adversary, the dedicated instrument of evil. The curses Israel once hurled against her enemies, we Christians hurl against the devil and his angels. Solemn ritual cursing formed a distinct part of the preparations for the Holy War. So it does to this day. It cannot be too much emphasized that the curses and expressions of hatred in our scriptures are inspired by the Holy Ghost. Christians should use them as heartily as any Israelite warrior ever did, against their spiritual adversary.

In this connection there is another vital factor to be discussed. We may call it 'The Certainty of Victory'. Those whose strength is in the Name, Yahweh, cannot fail in battle and must not fear. It is a matter of sacred duty. Fear belongs to the sphere of evil and weakness. It is a sign that the individual concerned is no longer filled with holiness. His presence in the army is a source of danger to the rest. He may infect his fellows and so deprive them too of their charismatic strength. It is with this in mind that Gideon commands 'all who are fearful and trembling' to depart from Mount Gilead, before joining battle with the Midianites (Judges vii, 3), and the same measure is expressly legislated for in Deuteronomy (Deut. viii, 17). At all costs fear must be purged

out of the community of warriors. The certainty of victory depends not on the size of the army, but on the holiness of God. Here once more lies an elemental truth which it is vital to recapture from the ideals of the Holy War. Without it, poverty, chastity and obedience can hardly be preserved in their integrity. In the heart of the consecrated religious it is vital that there should be no fear. He must be absolutely certain that the evil of his own times will ultimately be crushed by the holiness with which he himself is possessed.

III. THE RELIGIOUS STATE IN CHRIST

One after another the great founders of the religious orders teach their subjects to see their life in terms of a holy contest against sin and the devil. In this they are utterly true to the scriptures, and to the ancient spirit of Israel. That one enters religion in order to vanquish Satan in the power of God's holiness, remains to this day a sacred matter of fact. The austerities of the religious life continue to be, in essence, the austerities of the war-camp. But far more than this, they are the austerities of Christ himself. One cannot remember often enough that he is the prototype of all religious, the very source of holiness, and as such the conqueror of the 'Prince of this world'.

In the moment of his victory the religious state achieves a new meaning. Poverty strips him of his garments; chastity hammers and nails the pain of all the world into his body. And in becoming obedient even to the death of the Cross, he overthrows for ever the kingdom of Satan, and enters as a co-equal into the holiness of God. What else is there for a Christian man still to want, when he finds himself called to live in union with him in the religious state?

In simple truth it must be said that there is no getting used to the wonder and happiness of being a religious; of being absorbed so uncompromisingly into the holiness of God, dedicated so utterly to crushing the evil of one's own times. The only real hardship here, the only real sadness, is not being a good enough religious, not being true enough to the poverty, chastity and obedience into which our Lord and our religious founder so graciously invited us. For relentlessly and unmistakably, first and last, that invitation reaches us in the last great cry from the Cross. And on the Cross what else could poverty mean except the nakedness of

the dying Jesus, or chastity except his pain, or obedience except his death under the stroke of God's holiness, so joyfully willed and welcomed as it was?

'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. . . . There are eunuchs that have made themselves so for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. . . . If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.'

Collectively and individually, many of us religious of the present day would acknowledge that by our shameful mediocrity we are failing our Lord on the Cross. But the moment of his death, the moment of our invitation, continues for us. His nakedness and pain and death cry out to us still to be poor and chaste and obedient, to share with him in the holiness of God, to war with him against the powers of evil, to be his religious. What can one say? Only:

'I make profession and promise obedience to God, to Holy Mary, to my holy founder, and to you, my superiors and to your successors, that according to the Rule and Constitutions of my Order, I will be obedient to you and to your successors until death'.



THE SPIRITUAL LIFE; AN HISTORICAL APPROACH—I

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

THERE is a department of theology known as 'spiritual theology' or 'ascetical and mystical theology', or from a more historical standpoint 'history of spirituality'. (The word 'spirituality' is unwelcome in English, but corresponds to the perfectly acceptable '*spiritualité*' in French.) This 'discipline' or subject within a course of theology is, from an academic point of view, something of a cinderella among the subjects in which the clergy are trained, and indeed in the 1930s the Angelicum in Rome claimed to be almost uniquely advanced in possessing a chair of *historia spiritualitatis*, the chair being first occupied by Père Paul Philippe, O.P., who subsequently became Commissary

of the Holy Office (the modern title of the Inquisitor General). But the subject as an historical discipline was gaining recognition at that time, and the great *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* was begun by Père Marcel Viller, S.J., in 1937 as a counterpart to the great *Dictionnaires* in other areas of theology. Meanwhile there existed already what is still the standard work from the historical angle, Père Pourrat's *Histoire de Spiritualité*, whose four volumes began to appear in 1918. M. l'Abbé Vernet's *Spiritualité médiévale* was published in 1929, and Père Viller's *Spiritualité des premiers siècles* in 1930. From the angle of technical theology several textbooks had been appearing by that time, notably Padre Juan Arintero, O.P., *Grados de Oración* in 1918 (the English translation *Stages in Prayer* was published in 1957), the famous *Perfection chrétienne et Contemplation* of Père Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., in 1923 (with the brief résumé entitled *Les trois conversions et les trois voies* in 1933), and what is probably the most well-known textbook of the theology of the spiritual life, including extensive historical sections, the *Synopsis* of that great Sulpician priest, Adolphe Tanqueray (†1932), first published in 1926 as a counterpart to his *Synopses* of the other parts of theology, which had begun to appear at the end of the last century and are still standard works. A modern post-war textbook in this tradition is that of Père de Guibert, S.J., *Theologia Spiritualis*, published posthumously in 1946 (English translation 1954). Another posthumous publication of the same author is the most important history of the spirituality of the Jesuits, which is a close examination of a narrow field in the history, as is, of course the monumental *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France* by M. l'Abbé Henri Brémond, which began to appear in 1916. Interest in the history of spirituality in the East began to grow at the same time, notably with the work of Père Irénée Hausherr, S.J., for instance, with his work *La méthode d'oraison hésychaste* of 1927. And for the roots of Christian spirituality in the Fathers of the Church all students are indebted to Père Rouet de Journel, S.J., for adding the *Enchiridion Asceticum* (a collection of relevant texts) in 1929 to the existing series of *Enchiridia* or collections of sources for other areas of theology, Denzinger for authoritative declarations of the Church, Kirch for early Church history and Rouët de Journel himself for patristics, together with the biblical volume, the new edition of which now matches the series.

All this goes to show that especially from the historical angle, this is still a relatively new department of theology. We have indeed always had at our elbows the masters of the spiritual life, but what is new is the study of the development of their thought and their approach to the problems of the life of the spirit. We all know that we are here on earth to know God, to love him and to serve him. The question is, how have the generations of the masters throughout the centuries understood this? What have they taught us (and successively one another) about prayer and Christian perfection? For prayer is our means of growing in the knowledge and love of God, 'the doorway of God's gifts' as St Teresa says (*Vida*, 8), and with it must go the 'conquest of self' as St Ignatius says (*Exercises* 21): indeed not only with it, but because of it, and in turn our own perfection makes us more ready to pray. This is the interplay of the ascetical and mystical elements in the spiritual life: the spiritual combat on the one hand and the heart raised to God on the other. Some modern writers (as Père de Guibert) have deplored the division into ascetical and mystical theology, and only use the term 'spiritual theology', because of the unity of the spiritual life: God's work in the soul which is ready to receive him, and man's own conquest with the help of God's grace. It was, after all, an early master of the ascetical life, St Basil (†397), who said that 'the ascetical life has a single object: the salvation of the soul' (PG 31, 625; *Ench. Ascet.* 261), and his brother St Gregory of Nyssa (†394), who has been called the Father of Christian mysticism, who said at the end of his *Vita Moysis* that 'only one thing is really worthwhile and precious (*timion te kai erasmion*), namely to become God's friend' (PG 44, 429; *Ench. Ascet.* 345). And before hard and fast distinctions between ascetical and mystical theology had been thought, of, we have St Thomas' theology of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which is central to his teaching on the spiritual life, for the Gifts are 'a kind of habits, by which man is rendered perfectly ready promptly to obey the movement of the Holy Spirit' (e.g. I-II, 68, 3), and, since 'it is charity (or the love of God) which is the measure of Christian perfection' (II-II, 184, 1), it is in particular the Gift of Wisdom that is concerned with spiritual perfection, because it is 'related to Charity' (II-II, 45, prologue). Thus for St Thomas it is the Gifts of the Holy Ghost which link man's work of his own perfection (ascetical theology) and God's work in the soul

(mystical theology), since grace builds upon nature, and the love of God excludes that which is contrary to Christian perfection, such as grave sin, and also that which obstructs growth in perfection, such as venial sins (II-II 184, 2-3).

The present series of four articles is being written with the conviction that an historical approach to Christian teaching on the spiritual life, an enquiry into the thought of successive masters on the subjects of prayer and perfection, will be a powerful aid to the deepening of our own understanding of what the knowledge, love and service of God means today to us, who have 'so great a cloud of witnesses over our head'. For Christian teaching has been built up gradually from the Gospel itself, and there is a most remarkable unity throughout the history, with frequent echoes from one age to another, as when Gregory of Nyssa in the *Vita Moysis* speaks of 'seeing God in a cloud (*en gnophô*)' (PG 44, 375; *Ench. Ascet.* 341) and the word is taken up a thousand years later by the anonymous English author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*. Yet there are constantly new statements and new emphasis, and one master will speak to our hearts more readily than another at one stage or at one age of our lives, or even in one or another mood of day-to-day living. Sometimes it will be the fourth-century mysticism of Gregory of Nyssa that will show us the way up the mountain of God, or the fifth-century Denis that will open the heavens to us for a moment, or we shall feel the need of the ascetical discipline of their contemporary Basil, with his rule, or the arduous lives of the Fathers of the Desert. At another time maybe it will be the medieval bitter-sweet of the severe yet mellifluous Bernard that will capture us, or the analytical guidance of St Thomas Aquinas, or the wise counsels of Thomas à Kempis, or it will be St Catherine's understanding of *la dolce providenza* that will bring us consolation. Or again we may feel ourselves children of our age when we turn to the *devotio moderna* that began in the Benedictine abbeys of Padua and Montserrat, became famous in the brilliance of St Ignatius, and had its counterpart in the mysticism of St Teresa and St John of the Cross, all of which had a wonderful flowering in the teaching of St Francis de Sales, who is still the modern master of today.

The above sentences are designed to indicate what may be called the three ages in the development of Christian teaching on the spiritual life: the patristic heritage, the medieval period and

the new devotion which arose together with the new world which came into being in Tridentine times. The next three articles will be devoted to a closer examination of these three periods. In this introductory article let us indicate on a larger canvas something of their development and characteristics.

In the patristic age, when men's thoughts on the life of the spirit sprang directly from the Gospel and were tempered with the notions of Greek philosophy and sharpened at the beginning by the vagaries of Gnostic heresies, we find the first express teaching on the spiritual life with Clement of Alexandria (†216). Certain words that were to become so familiar are already current in his writings: contemplation (*theôria*) brings knowledge (*gnôsis*) of God, which is the object of all piety, but to achieve this it is necessary to practise *apatheia* or a conquest of the passions. Here we have the contemplative or mystical element closely bound up with the ascetical. It is with the two brothers Gregory of Nyssa and Basil that we find with the one an emphasis on the mystical element and with the other the groundwork of the asceticism and monastic traditions of the East. In the fifth century in the East we have the great Denis (the 'Pseudo-Denis the Areopagite') who had such an enormous influence on the medieval world, and where we find the first traces of the 'three ways' or three stages in the soul's spiritual development with his 'purification (*kátharsis*), illumination (*éllampsis*), and union (*hénôsis*)'; while almost contemporarily in the West is the dominant figure of St Augustine (†430), the great lover, who probably more than any other writer has taught all succeeding ages of Christendom what is the love of God, and how all Christian perfection is ultimately this. Near the end of the patristic period there is Maximus the Confessor (†662) who summed up, as it were, both the mystical and ascetical traditions of the East. It was Cassian (†435) who brought the Eastern ascetical and monastic traditions of the Fathers of the Desert into the West, and it is worth observing that St Benedict (†543), the father of Western monasticism, in the last chapter of the Holy Rule prescribes for the Brethren's reading, after the Bible, the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert, the conferences of Cassian, and the Rule of St Basil. Thus the patristic heritage comes to the middle ages.

Christian thought in the medieval time was greatly influenced on the one hand by St Augustine and on the other by Denis (the

Dictionnaire de Spiritualité devotes no less than 112 columns to the subject of Denis' influence in the West). At the same time a typically Western attitude of theological analysis was developing in Scholasticism. St Anselm (†1109 as Archbishop of Canterbury) was a Benedictine, and has rightly or wrongly been called the father of Scholasticism, and his interest at once in theological speculation and in what Père Pourrat calls the 'affective approach' to prayer—a turning to the Lord with consuming love—has made him specially typical of his age. Later in the twelfth century the loving and lovable character of St Bernard (†1153) is a dominant master, and it is with him that we find the first working-out of the theology of mysticism, the soul's union with God, which received its fullness of exposition with St Teresa and St John of the Cross. In the fourteenth century there are several contemporary groups, independent, and considered by the historians as 'schools': there was the German Benedictine school of nuns, with the two Mechtildes (both these actually before 1300) and St Gertrude; there was the great German Dominican school of mystics, Eckhart, Tauler and Suso; and at the same time a great influence in the Augustinian Ruysbroeck; and the English school of Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton and Mother Julian of Norwich. It is difficult at first to realize that all these were near contemporaries of St Catherine of Siena (†1380), whose thought had been in turn much indebted to the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas (†1274). St Catherine perhaps represents the last flowering of the medieval world in this area of history: there are still many echoes of the Fathers, not least important the notion that Christian living is prayer all the time; 'the whole of life is filled with the power of prayer', said St Basil a thousand years before (PG 31, 244; Ench. Ascet. 257; cf. *Dialogo* 78).

But the way was coming for the new world, an expanding world full of new things, a world where there were no more deserts in which to pray undisturbed. Already with Thomas à Kempis (†1471) we find the need of turning in upon oneself to consider the eternal truths and gradually we find books of formal meditation appearing—a time is to be set aside for prayer. Père Pourrat (III p. 6) speaks of '*la méthodisation de la prière*'. It did not happen suddenly: the principles of a method were already well known: a careful meditation upon a particular subject, the fruit perhaps of reading, and then in the light of these considerations,

acts of love and quiet contemplation. One of the first and most important of strict methods was the *Modus meditando*, of Abbot Luigi Barbo (†1443) of Santa Giustina at Padua. A little later came the *Ejercitatorio* of García de Cisneros (†1510), Abbot of Montserrat, and it was this book that was given to the young Ignatius when he went to Montserrat in 1522 after his conversion. Cisneros' method was closely followed, but brilliantly developed, by St Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises*. Meditation followed by what he called the 'Colloquy' or conversation with our Lord, and a brief contemplation with acts of love: these are, after all, the elements of all prayer—a raising of the mind (thought) and the heart (love) to God.

Thus the *devotio moderna* became widespread, and at the same time the complete theology of mystical union with God was being worked out by St Teresa and St John of the Cross. The theology of the 'three ways' had become classical: the Purgative Way for beginners, including St Teresa's first three '*moradas*' (or stopping-places, usually translated 'mansions'), the first being just to lead a good life, the second being to pray, and third to pray more seriously and intensely; the Illuminative Way of the 'proficient', which includes the fourth 'mansion', being what later writers called '*abandon à la volonté de Dieu*' (Père de Caussade, S.J., †1751); and finally the Unitive Way of the perfect who are wholly conformed to God's will, which includes the fifth to the seventh 'mansion' of St Teresa, where union of wills is complete.

St Francis de Sales (†1622) built his teaching with regard to method to a great extent on St Ignatius, though much freedom in exact method is characteristic of St Francis de Sales, and his teaching on mystical prayer and contemplation is based upon St Teresa. We should remember that Francis de Sales was already nineteen when Teresa died, although he had not yet begun to think very much about these things at that time; yet their lifetimes do overlap. Pope Pius XI wrote an encyclical in 1923 about St Francis de Sales—his predecessor Benedict XV had intended to write it for the tercentenary, but died before doing it—and he points out that it was Francis de Sales who proclaimed that 'holiness of life is not a privilege of a few, but that all are called to it', and attacked the notion that it is 'so involved in difficulties, that people in the world cannot attain it', and furthermore he asserted that 'sanctity is compatible with every walk of life'. And

a master of today, Père Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., has repeatedly declared that contemplation is in 'la voie normale de la sainteté': some measure of contemplation is normal for all who are trying to lead a holy life. It may not be universal, but it is normal, to gaze quietly at God, even if only for a second, with a deep conviction of his presence. It is the *theôria*, or 'gazing', which the Greek fathers spoke of. St Teresa said that it is for the soul to 'gaze at him who is gazing at us' (*Vida* 13). And we are back with St Gregory of Nyssa at speaking with God, as Moses did, 'as a man is wont to speak to his friend'.



THE SACRAMENTS: V—ORDER

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

THE sacrament of order is much less familiar to most people than the sacraments which have so far been considered. Every Catholic has been baptized, confirmed, has gone to confession; many are married or have assisted at a marriage; very few have taken part in an ordination. The priesthood is often falsely thought of as a special privileged state, remote from the Catholic community at large, and naturally there is little interest in the sacrament by which priests are made. We must therefore begin by getting an idea of the meaning of priesthood in relation to the whole Christian people.

A priest is a man who offers sacrifice to God. In the Old Testament we find careful regulations for the offering of ritual sacrifices of every kind by the official priests. But here at once we also find a warning against any narrow interpretation of the word 'sacrifice'. For the prophets speak strongly against sacrifices which are merely external; however exactly the holocausts are performed in accordance with the rubrics of the law, they are not pleasing to God unless they are true signs of an inward disposition of heart. We begin to see that sacrifice must extend to a total offering of self to God, beyond the symbolic offering of some possession. 'A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise' (Psalm 1, 19). It is this notion

of sacrifice which lies behind the classical Augustinian definition of it as 'anything done in order to unite us to God in one holy society'.

Corresponding to these two ideas of sacrifice in the Old Testament, the narrow and the wide, we have two ideas of priesthood—not necessarily with any sense of opposition. On the one hand there were the Levitical priests offering the official ritual sacrifice as representatives of the people, and on the other hand the whole nation itself, able to 'offer to God the sacrifice of praise' (Psalm xlix, 14). For the nation as such is seen in scripture as a holy people, holy because of its special call from God: set apart from other nations, alone able to respond to the holiness of God. In this sense the result of the covenant is to make Israel a nation of priests, offering their hearts and minds to him in true inward worship. 'If therefore you will hear my voice, and keep my covenant, you shall be my peculiar possession above all people, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a priestly kingdom, and a holy nation' (Exodus xix, 5-6). In the first sense it is natural to think of the Levites as mediators between God and the people, 'ordained for men in the things that appertain to God' (Hebrews v, 1). In the second sense it is also possible to see Israel as mediating between God and the other nations, though this is a more difficult idea and one for which there is not much evidence in scripture.¹

Any tension between these two ideas was resolved at the coming of our Lord, for his sacrificial death was the outward sign of perfect inward conformity to the will of his Father—he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross' (Philippians ii, 8). As the epistle to the Hebrews shows, there was no further need of a Levitical priesthood that 'served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things', for these things had now come about. In the Christian dispensation there is but one priest and one sacrifice. The word *hiereus* (priest) is used of no other individual but our Lord, not only in the New Testament, but in patristic writing until well into the second century. Yet because the tension between inward and exterior worship had been healed, it could continue to be used of the whole community, the new Israel, just as it had once been applied to 'Israel after the flesh'. The passage from Exodus

¹ For much of what follows I must acknowledge my debt to Père Congar's important book, *Lay People in the Church* (London, 1957).

that has just been quoted is taken up in St Peter's reference to the Church as 'a spiritual house, a holy priesthood', or again as 'a kingly priesthood, a holy nation' (1 Peter ii, 5, 9) and in the mention of us in the Apocalypse as 'a kingdom and priests to God' (i, 6). The explanation is given in the long argument of the epistle to the Hebrews, in which the high-priest of the old law, entering each year into the inner sanctuary alone, is contrasted with our Lord who entered the sanctuary of the heavens once and for all, not alone, but taking with him all the people. In more familiar Pauline theology, the Christian people can share in the priesthood that offers holy obedience to God, since together they form but a single body with Christ.

Yet we know that there is also a hierarchy of priests in the Church: what can be said of this? There is no need to be disconcerted by the lack of evidence for it in the early texts. Its existence is presupposed in the celebration of the Eucharist, of which these same texts speak plainly. The fact is that the first Christians were more aware than we of the representative (sacramental) nature of the eucharistic sacrifice. Just as the Eucharist only shows forth again the one sacrifice of the cross, and applies it to the faithful, so the earthly priesthood ordained to celebrate the sacrament merely shows forth again the priesthood of Christ. All the reality is from heaven. This is the sense in which the early apologists were prepared to deny that Christians had altars and sacrifices on earth, and in which the new functional terminology of *episcopos* (superintendent) and *presbyteros* (elder) was devised. We need not doubt that the rite of the laying on of hands, by which for example we read that Timothy was ordained (1 Timothy iv, 14) had the same significance that it has today. Our Lord instituted the sacrament of order at the same moment in which he commanded 'do this for the commemoration of me'. There is ample justification for the second-century introduction of the modern terminology of priesthood and sacrifice in connection with the official public worship of God on earth. But something has perhaps been lost in the blurring of the distinction between priesthood in this sense and that common to all, by which the people of God offer to him the sacrifice of a holy life, and which will alone remain in heaven after sacramental worship has come to an end.

We have still to see in what sense lay-people, as distinct from

the priesthood dedicated to liturgical worship, can be said to share in that work. Here St Thomas makes the interesting suggestion (*S.T.* III, 63, 1-6) that the character associated with certain sacraments, and which has already been discussed in connection with confirmation,² is given for the purpose of public worship. The grace which comes from the sacraments, depending on our inward dispositions, is for our personal life in the Church, but a permanent character is also given because we have also to play a part in her public life of worship. This character therefore represents our share in the life of Christ precisely as he is priest, a share given in different degrees by baptism, confirmation, and finally by ordination. A priest by his ordination character has the power to minister in the person of Christ, performing the liturgy which Christ instituted, and handing on its fruits to the rest of the community; but similarly a layman by his baptismal character has the power to assist at this celebration and to receive its fruits. The difference of degree in which we share in the priesthood of Christ leads us naturally to think of a hierarchy of function in the Church, such as the very name *order* implies. In speaking of the priesthood common to all we saw our share as coming from the fact that we form one body with Christ; from the present point of view we should see him as head of the body, having power and authority over it, and sharing that power and authority in unequal degrees. Though priests have to serve and minister in the Church on behalf of the people, they have authority from above, and stand in the place of Christ.

Other powers are of course included in the priestly office. The Bishop holds the place of an Apostle in relation to his flock; he governs, guards the deposit of faith, and preaches the gospel. He delegates these powers to his priests and in some degree to the laity (are we not all called to be apostles?). But such powers, in so far as they belong to the priestly office, flow from the power to celebrate the liturgy. We cannot separate faith and sacraments: the official place for reading and expounding the Gospel is at Mass. That is why the sacrament of order is given in the course of a solemn public celebration of the Eucharist by the head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the presence of his priests and people.

This essential connection of the sacrament with the sacrificial aspect of worship explains why the power to give valid orders

can be lost by those who separate themselves from the Church. These articles are not meant to deal with matters of controversy, but the question of the validity of orders is of such importance in this country, and so often misunderstood, that something must be said about it.³ As we have already mentioned, the external action or 'matter' of the rite is that which has been used from apostolic times for the handing on of spiritual power. The bishop lays his hands on the head of the man he is ordaining (in the case of the ordination of a priest, other priests, who form with the bishop but a single body, may also share in this action). As in the other sacraments, the minister must say certain words, the 'form', in order to make this action effective by defining its meaning. These words express the faith of the Church, which has received the supernatural meaning of the rite from our Lord himself. Now it is curious to note that it was only in 1947 that the Church declared the exact form of words, a part of the preface sung by the ordaining bishop, which was essential for the validity of the rite of ordination. Before that there was considerable controversy among theologians as to the exact point in the rite at which the sacrament was given. Indeed we know that historically a wide variety of liturgies has been validly used to ordain priests and bishops. In view of this, and of the fact that even the form as now known makes no explicit reference to the sacrificial function of priests, it might be supposed that any rite meant to set men aside for the ministry would be valid.

But in looking at the words used in any rite, we must remember that their meaning is a matter of human usage and convention. A rite may contain no explicit reference at all to the meaning of priesthood, and yet its historical context can show that it was clearly intended to ordain priests in the Catholic sense. On the other hand, a rite in which it is clear that the word 'priest' is being used in some sense contrary to the orthodox one cannot be valid. Where a rite has been deliberately changed from that in use in the Church, we have to consider its objective meaning, and look at what may loosely be called 'the intention of its framers' to see if it is valid or not. It was from this point of view that Leo XIII in his bull *Apostolicae Curae* condemned the Edwardine and subsequent Anglican ordinals. He said that the 'native character and spirit' of the Anglican rite was such as to make it impossible to

³ Here my debt is to *Anglican Orders*, by Francis Clark, S.J. (London 1956).

suppose that it could be used in a Catholic sense.

In this connection it is perhaps worth discussing briefly the question of intention in the administration of a sacrament. The Church teaches that any minister must personally intend 'at least to do what the Church does'.⁴ The reason is that the minister of a sacrament, though an instrument in the hands of God, acts as a human being, not as a machine (*S.T.* III, 64, 8). The sacraments would otherwise be mere magic. The minister need not believe in the efficacy of what he is doing: his personal faith is not in question, and we know that even pagans can give valid baptism. He may even declare that the effect of the sacrament he is giving is other than the Church says it is, but at least he must have the general Christian intention to do what she does. If he should explicitly reject what is an essential part of the Sacramental meaning, such as the very power to sacrifice in the case of orders, then this act of will contradicts and cancels out any general intention he may have had to do what Christ instituted. We must of course have clear evidence of this; *Apostolicae Curae* says that the Church judges intention only so far as it is externally manifested. In the case of Anglican ordinations, this judgment is not made about the intention of every bishop. Unlike the judgment about defect of form, which is general, it bears only on the key case of the consecration of Matthew Parker, on which all other Anglican ordinations depend. The evidence for the intention of his consecrators is given by the fact that they deliberately used a rite which had been substituted for the Catholic one, and which in its historical context can be seen to exclude the conferring of a sacrificial priesthood.

I am all too aware of a deep division in the manner in which I have treated the sacrament of order in this article: it is a long way from the general theological treatment with which I began, to the details of a sixteenth-century ordination. Yet the principle that emerges from this is surely a great one, the principle that sacraments are human things as well as divine, and that God asks for our co-operation rather than force our wills to continue his gift of divine life on the earth. The decision of the Church in the matter of Anglican orders must have been agonizing to make; she could not have decided otherwise without renouncing her guardianship of human dignity in face of God.

⁴ *Saltem faciendi quod facit Ecclesia*, Trent, session VII, canon 14.

OVERHEARD

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

Two young persons are discovered in a London cafeteria. Each carries a tray and is dressed in black. Their sex does not matter. They may look like apprentice undertakers or trainee deaconesses. In fact they are novices in religious orders, ancient and modern.

Hullo, fancy meeting you.

—Me too you.

Look, here's a table free.

—Goodo. Aren't you immured in a cloister?

I am. Thought you'd taken the plunge too. Isn't yours called a *convictum*?

—It sure is. What brings you up to town?

Lawyers. Just for the day, though. All set to sign away my birthright. Benefit of a nephew actually. Hope it'll be nephews and nieces too—that is, if my sisters do their stuff. And you?

—Dentist.

We have to go to the local man.

—Ours is the superior's brother. Wimpole Street. Came up by car.

Alone? I've got an escort. Gone to the Zoo. Permission of course.

—Mine's off buying some records. Plainsong you know.

We get enough of that as it is. Anyhow we're not allowed gramophones. Not even the wireless, except for the weather, of course, and the Queen on Christmas afternoon.

—Oh, we're encouraged rather. Especially the Third Programme what used-to-be. Television too, but only for science. We're supposed to keep abreast. Orders from Rome.

We sort of jog along in our own way.

—That's different; you people have been at it for I don't know how many centuries. Sometimes I rather envy you primitives. We're wired throughout, and they're talking about giving the points for morning and evening meditation over the loud-speaker.

Lor.

—The mid-day examen too.

We don't go in for that. Why, we haven't even got running h. & c., not to speak of mod. con.

—All the same, I must say you look pretty well on compost and contemplation. How are you getting on really? Life of the spirit, I mean.

Not too bad. Took me some time to get used to the Office. The just man flourishing like the palm-tree, that sort of thing, and laetabunting in his cubicle. Wasn't my natural idiom exactly.

—Do you think you'll stick it?

Hope so. I've passed my council, anyhow. Hence this jaunt. And you?

—They reckon I'll stay the course. Mean to anyhow. It wasn't quite what I'd expected.

Same here. Thought there'd be more privacy for one thing.

—And for another—well, it's difficult to put.

Try, all the same.

—Not that it matters much. Just scratching the surface. Scratching's the word.

—Well, I never thought for a moment that I was doing the noble or making the grand renunciation, yet I wasn't prepared for being back again where I was before and this time rather more humdrum.

Sort of finicky too. Little things loaded with terrific importance. Suppose they have to be when you're being trained.

—By the way, are you taught to seek perfection according to the way of spiritual infancy?

Heavens no. However, the rule sees to it that we don't take an inordinate conceit in ourselves.

—That's putting it mildly. I feel sometimes one ought to fight against being ground down to the nursery level.

The other day in refectory while we were munching our beans and being read to out of an improving book I heard the phrase, Take care of the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves. I caught the eye of an old stager up at the top. There was almost a wink. There was certainly a nod.

—See what comes of not keeping proper custody of the eyes. Seriously though, I do see the point of routine and attention to detail. Especially in a community. Spit and polish. You're not disciplined unless you can be trusted to go through the proper

motions, whatever you're feeling like. But surely you don't have to be obsessional about pettiness.

The big issues seem to recede, and all sorts of trivialities are thrust forward in their place.

—Such a lot of them too.

And day in day out.

—In themselves they don't upset me. It's when they're charged with significance.

For instance, we never drink tea in the afternoon; it wasn't invented when we were founded. Personally I quite like small beer before Vespers, but not its becoming a crucial test. Thank heavens, though, an exception's made for breakfast. Then we're given coffee.

—Probably orders from Rome. Like making the Carthusians go for a walk from time to time, and talk.

Actually it's not. It started ages ago to celebrate a victory over the Turk. In those days we were ruled by a Habsburg or somebody, who went on for years and years like Queen Victoria. It became established. What they call a laudable custom. I see you're drinking coca-cola.

—It makes a nice change. I get tired of hot drinks made from powder. As you know, our holy founder was a Swiss.

Soon to be canonized, I hear.

—Yes, they say the cause is advancing very favourably. However, I can't think it matters much what a particular liquid habit was. You can't make it into a sort of sacramental.

Perhaps it helps *esprit de corps*. Like handlebar-moustaches for fighter pilots. Anyhow, you can always fall back on water. Or can you?

—Of course. I don't mind if it's put like that. But take smoking. We're told it's a theological imperfection, except on the foreign missions to keep the flies away.

We're told we can't afford it. Probably amounts to the same in the end.

—Maybe. Anyhow, I quite agree that irksome things as such, well, they're merely difficulties. It's when they recommended or imposed as being more than they're worth that they can become problems. Obedience isn't a cover-up for little-mindedness.

Hennish, said St Teresa.

—Men are less defenceless than women, according to report. Burlier, I suppose.

—Have you also noticed?

What?

—They say you need a sense of humour, but I must say I've been rather shaken to catch myself becoming rather a giggler.

So've I. And one prattles at recreation.

—Ugh, like a pack of psychological innocents. Suppose it's better than being sophisticated.

We've got some pretty gnarled types. Expect you have too.

—Yes. But they're not the official pattern. Perhaps they're really better than the lines they're given to read.

Feel sure God likes humanity to be racy. I think there's a danger of equating the ordinary and the mediocre. If Christian charity is made into a kind of specialized technique, you're left with a gap between your religious occupations and things of common or garden interest.

—Like books, if you see what I mean. Some of our seniors never seem to read anything between spiritual works and bloods. Except for Malise Browne's novels, but then he doesn't count, being a specialist in the problem of evil. Still, we musn't forget the *Catholic Clarion*.

Not to speak of the *Diptych*.

—All the same, most of our people turn first to the *Cosmos* when the Catholic papers arrive on Friday.

Oh I don't know. Even pundits scan the *Rocket* at breakfast before working their way through the *Jupiter*. No, I think our trouble is not the packaging of religious truth and practices, but rather the fact that some special packages are given the monopoly.

—All from tins or cellophane-wrapped.

And you don't have to prepare anything for yourself.

—All laid on. While in the world one had choices, important ones too. Confession seemed to matter. Anyhow it seemed more important. Common decency. Fairness. Aren't they better than acts of interior abnegation about nothing more substantial than one's private whims and fancies? Though I must say I seem to be biting on things at present.

Certainly both of us seem to be sucking our teeth rather.

—Do you think we're indulging in spiritual pride?

I wouldn't be surprised.

—Neither of us are the best judges of how we should be trained for responsibility.

That's really the point.

—The Jesuit who gave our retreat said that austerity was just another name for efficiency.

Did he now? The Dominican who gave ours said that the signs of a religious vocation were a good digestion and a sense of proportion together with easy manners and the team-spirit. Some of the novices thought he was taking rather a low view.

—Our Jesuit warned us that scruples were an occupational disease.

Our Dominican promised that we'd have a better chance of growing out of them after we'd studied St Thomas's treatise on Grace.

Enter two elderly persons. They are canonically religious to judge from their countenances and clothes. They meet at the counter.

How are you?

—Good to see you. Here of all places.

Catholic ownership. A prominent Catumbian.

—That's why I come too. (*To the manageress.*) Thank you, my dear child, it's uncommonly kind of you. Good, good, that table there over by the window. You'll take the parcel too. Thank you. And you'll have the trays brought across. Thank you. Well, well, well, it's a long time since we met.

Nine months. At the Religious Vocations Exhibition.

—So it was. I've brought up one of ours. On business.

That's a coincidence, I'm doing the same. There's mine over there. He hasn't noticed me.

—The two of them together. Don't let's disturb them. Wonder what they're talking about.

'm.

—What's yours like?

Devout but reticent.

—Ours too is deeds not words.

Hope they're typical. Do you remember the paper on Modern Youth and Observance?

—All the more impressive coming from a bishop.

He told us not to mistake clichés for principles.

—And that reverence was relative.

I imagine our elders thought we were disrespectful when we were young.

—They say the younger generation doesn't produce such characters as in the old days. All the same, I think we were tamer. We used to read the minor spiritual classics.

Now they prefer the Bible.

—Perhaps that's it.



THE PRINCIPAL MEANS OF PERFECTION

PÈRE LALLEMANT

Translated by Hugh Farmer, O.S.B.

I. THE SACRAMENTS

THE principal practices which lead to perfection are the sacraments when we approach them with the necessary preparation; yet, curiously enough, this is the very truth which is most neglected. The sacraments give graces which result in the production within us of the effects proper to them: confession brings great purity of heart, Holy Communion close union with God and spiritual fervour in all our actions. . . . The more you approach the sacraments, the more graces you will receive to share in their effects. But the effects of these sacraments, namely purity of heart and spiritual fervour, are themselves the best preparation we can make to receive them.

A soul which before Holy Communion was in darkness, weak and languishing, but after it becomes enlightened, fervent and strong cannot doubt of the fruit of its communion, because the sacraments' effect is to give their proper sacramental grace. Hence after a good confession the soul receives much light on its interior dispositions, humble and loving contrition, and peace of a quiet conscience. After a good communion the soul experiences a taste for God and receives new strength to spend itself in God's service.

II. THE USE OF PENANCES

The right measure to observe in the use of penances is to do less than will alter one's health, but more than what permits rebellious nature to make its presence felt too keenly. When great perfection

is attained, a great deal of penance may be readily undertaken, and even heroic penances like those of the saints may be practised by God's special favour. The most harmful penances are those which prevent sleep, but to the most perfect God also grants the favour of sleeping little. The *measure* of penance differs according to people's temperament and conditions of life, and according to their age, time and needs.

III. VIRTUES

(a) *Faith*

As faith is the most excellent participation in uncreated Wisdom (except only the Beatific Vision), we must not base it on natural reason or our own human discoveries. Such reasonings can be useful for overcoming our repugnance and contradiction, removing our stupidity and preparing our mind to believe, but not to be the foundation of what we believe by faith, because faith includes God's whole authority: its foundation is both his infinite sovereign wisdom, which makes it impossible for him to be deceived, and his infinite fidelity which makes it impossible for him to deceive us.

Some people tremble at the perception of the truths of faith and do not want to think about them at all, although they do not doubt them. They flee from the thought of them because they are not accustomed to them. This is a great mistake, and at their death the devil will attack them at their weakest point.

Faith perfects the knowledge which brings the will to action. As faith resides partly in the will, according to St Thomas' teaching, it gives facility to all the virtues: faith's knowledge about temperance, for instance, will make me perform an act of temperance more easily than will the consideration of the soundness of temperance, and at the same time faith will make my act supernatural.

We should therefore try to found our lives on faith more and more. We should always walk in its light and substitute it for human reasonings on all kinds of subjects, and make it the light and the principle of all our actions. An act of the will based on faith is worth more than ten feelings of spiritual sweetness.

When God wills to become perfect master of a soul, he begins by winning the understanding through the gift to it of wonderful faith. Then he proceeds to the will, the memory, the imagination,

the sensitive appetites, and wins over these faculties also little by little. Then he passes to the senses and the movements of the body, and thus he comes to possess completely both the interior and the exterior. All this comes about through faith, which contains all virtues eminently (as the theologians say), and is the first motive power of their action. This is why we should make the exercise of faith habitual, and take it as our guide in all our actions.

It is most disastrous that some religious, often the majority, are guided only by human reason and natural prudence; they make hardly any use of faith except merely negatively by not acting against it. They devote themselves only to perfecting their reason and common sense without taking any trouble to grow in faith. This is just like a man taking great pains about the education of his slave while neglecting that of his son.

Nothing shows better the blindness and weakness of reason unaided by faith in matters of moral perfection than the trivial progress it made among all nations before the Incarnation. The Romans seem to have been the wisest and most perfect of all unbelievers: Holy Scripture attributes their success and power to their wisdom and patience, and St Augustine thought that God gave them a world-wide empire in reward for their virtue. Nevertheless, what was their wisdom and where did it lead them? How much vanity and corruption there was even in their most pure and solid virtue!

(b) *Trust in God*

One of the ways by which we most dishonour God is by our lack of trust in him. This fault arises because we do not consider enough what we have been given at the Incarnation, and what God made man has done for men. *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son*,¹ and as he did not spare his only Son but delivered him up for us all, what will he not give us after giving us him?²

If a king's son wished to die in order to expiate the crime of a vassal he loved, or if a king wished to give his son's life for a favourite, we would regard it rightly as most wonderful goodness and mercy; but that this son should wish to die and the father

¹ John iii, 16.

² Cf. Rom. viii, 32.

to give his son's life for their mortal enemy is an excess of goodness and mercy which we cannot conceive. Nevertheless this is what God has done: he gave his Son to mankind which was his enemy, not only to save it but also to raise it almost to the level of his divine nature. This is what the Son of God has done; although he could have saved mankind by a word, a tear or a sigh, he willed instead to merit the grace of salvation for us by the poor, industrious life he actually led and the cruel and shameful death he actually suffered.

Shall we still not trust in such mercy after this? Shall we not hope that this Redeemer, who is so full of goodness and redeemed us at the price of his own blood, shall deliver us from all our sins and imperfections?

Distrust is very displeasing to God, especially in souls which he has favoured with special graces. Moses did not enter the promised land because of lack of trust in God; he died within sight of what had been so often promised and so ardently desired, but he remained outside it and his prayers did not make God relent.

We do God an injustice when we say: 'When shall I be detached, or have the grace of interior prayer?' As though God were poor or niggardly in his gifts, and had not himself undertaken the care of our perfection. Let us only follow his will, co-operate with his graces and cultivate purity of heart; then we can be certain he will not fail us.

Many will never attain high perfection because they do not trust enough; strong, unchanging hope, founded on God's infinite mercy and goodness and on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, is absolutely necessary. *Thou alone, Lord, art the support of my hope.*³

We must hope for and expect great things from God because our Lord's merits belong to us. It is a great honour to God to hope for much from him; the more we hope from him, the more we honour him.

³ Psalm iv, 10.



REVIEWS

A HUNDRED HOMELESS YEARS. Godfrey Anstruther, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 22s. 6d.)

This book is an account of the story of the English Dominican Province between the suppression of the priory of St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, after the death of Queen Mary, and the foundation of the Priory at Bornhem in Belgium, a hundred years later, by Father Philip Thomas Howard, who later became Cardinal Protector of England.

For the first time, the whole story of a religious body during those grim years has been told. Father Anstruther has searched in archives in Italy, England, and Belgium. He has been able to use the archives of the Order, and the registers of the Masters General. By this arduous work he has pieced together, for the first time, the story of the brethren. He has not hidden anything. The author calls the book 'a frank account of what may happen to a great province of the Order when it loses its all'. We should be grateful to him, and to those who allowed its publication, for showing us the real story, with its black and white and grey.

We are told of those English Dominicans who never lost their faith in the Church, their pride in the Order, and their fortitude in the face of great trouble. We are also told of those who fell by the wayside, faced as they were with temptations that normally do not assail their modern brethren. We are shown the strange workings of God's providence.

Under the care of God, the Province ceased to exist and its members were scattered, as has happened in recent years to other provinces of the Order. But, at each major crisis, the right man was there, and quite unexpectedly. It was not just luck for us that the new Spanish Ambassador brought in 1613 such a remarkable man to be his confessor as the Dominican Father Diego de la Fuente. Nor did it happen just by chance that young Philip Howard failed to find an English-speaking confessor at the Franciscan house in Milan, and so went off to the Dominican house, where he found the Irish Father Hackett.

'Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us.' Each Dominican house should have this book, so that the brethren and sisters may learn about our own past, and the gratitude we owe to, among others, Padre Maestro de la Fuente, Father Thomas Middleton, Father George Catchmay, and the Cardinal of Norfolk, Father Thomas Howard. We remember, too, that those who failed to stay the course

were our brethren, prodigal children of our own family. It is a family of which we are the more proud after reading, and hearing read, this fascinating and honest book.

BEDE BAILEY, O.P.

REVELATION AND REDEMPTION: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF ST JOHN. By Dr William Grossouw. (Geoffrey Chapman, London; 8s. 6d.)

This little book originally appeared in Holland during the war, was later translated into French and recently adapted for the English-speaking world by the American Carmelite Martin Schoenberg. Fr Grossouw, Professor at the University of Nijmegen, is one of the leading exegetes in Holland, but does not confine himself to writing specialist literature. Among others he wrote two popular books, often reprinted in and outside Holland, which deeply influenced the growing movement of modern piety by giving it a basis of fresh biblical theology. The present book is in the same vein. It is not the author's intention to give the customary sort of introduction to a book of the Bible, in the form of information about the author, content and division of his work. St John is the most fascinating, but also the most difficult of all New Testament writers, and Fr Grossouw wants to 'lead the reader *into* the sanctum of St John's thought, not merely to bring him to the threshold and leave him there'. He therefore brings him into contact with St John's leading ideas and peculiar way of thought. We think of St John as an abstract writer. This book shows this to be a misleading opinion. Like all Semites he knew no 'concepts', abstract ideas as we do. For them to know a thing is not looking at it from a distance, but to 'handle' it, to experience it in their own life. St John writes about a living reality, which his seemingly abstract words do not so much analyse conceptually as stand for, fully in the concrete. His vocabulary is therefore wider and more fluctuating than is usual in western languages: words we would think rather different (light and truth, e.g.) cover in fact the same reality. After he has given this necessary introduction in a first chapter, Fr Grossouw introduces us to a few characteristic ideas, Light, Life and Love, then gives an extensive treatment of St John's christology, explaining terms like 'Word' (*Logos*), 'Son', 'Saviour', and finally deals with the answer of man to the redemption and revelation offered in Christ: Faith and Love, Hierarchy and Sacraments.

All this is the best of modern exegetical science, presented in a plain and personal way. There is an abundance of parallel texts, to which an index at the end of the book refers; the reader has to work hard, but the reward is that one begins to see something of the greatness of St

John's theology which, once experienced, one will look further for ever after. Only at times one meets some rather unnecessary apologetics, a few misprints and odd translations. I personally regret that Grossouw's telling example to illustrate the relation between Christ's real words and St John's report of them ('If you listen to Reger's variations on a theme of Mozart you always hear Mozart's melody, albeit with a late-romantic harmony') has disappeared from this translation. These little things, however, are not really worth mentioning. It is a pity that in Holland, where of all countries the Catholic background and religious climate are most alike to that of Britain, people speak such a rare language. There is a series of these little books worth reading; perhaps Fr Schoenberg may find the time to translate some more of them.

MARK SCHOOF, O.P.

THE GOSPEL OF JOY. By J. M. Perrin, O.P. (Blackfriars; IIS.)

One is familiar enough with those forms of religion, or rather religiosity, which cultivate a shining morning face and foregather in conventicles labelled Pleasant Sunday Afternoon where folk address one another, self-consciously perhaps, as 'Brother'. It is easy to dismiss them with a sneer, but we should be wise first of all to examine our consciences. Has anyone perhaps been turned away from true religion to this kind of shallow religiosity by my failure to perceive what our medieval forefathers perceived more easily, namely that joy is not only a fruit of the Holy Ghost but a requirement of holiness? It would have been remarkable if English Catholics had remained for the last three hundred years untainted by the various forms of Calvinist Protestantism that have surrounded them and had not occasionally put on a long face and taken not their religion, but themselves, too seriously. However, Christian joy is more than beating the big drum and asserting that we are saved. Its roots are in the Gospel, in the good tidings of the coming of Christ and the transformation of human nature by redemption, a transformation that leaves plenty of room for pain and sorrow beside happiness and joy. Father Perrin in this short book gives us first a brief and sound analysis of Christian joy, and then applies these principles in meditations on the Beatitudes and in explaining the part joy should play in our sanctification. It is fitting that this book should be written by a son of St Dominic, who was notably a man whose intense suffering and hard work went side by side with a joy that radiated to other people.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

NAISSANCE DU CHRÉTIEN. Par Pierre Herbin. (Editions du Cerf.)

This is a lively book, and one that many would not perhaps at first recognize as 'liturgical' if they were expecting only pious meditations or a history of ceremonial. There is here pious meditation enough on the meaning of four sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist and Penance. But it is all linked up in a most intelligent way with ancillary rituals such as the blessing of a pregnant mother or the consecration of a baby to our Lady, and with innumerable practical matters such as how to dress for first Holy Communion, what offering to make the priest after Baptism, invitations to the christening party, photographs after first communion. This is all excellent and far from trivial because it makes a unity of the Christian life. One brief passage replies to 'Pourquoi M. le Curé ne fait-il pas comme dans la paroisse d'à côté?'. And apparently certain French dioceses encourage the custom of giving to the priest after Baptism an offering 'qui ne saurait consister uniquement dans le cadeau . . . d'une boîte de dragées'.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

LE MYSTÈRE DE LA DIVINE CHARITÉ. Par Dom Georges Léfèbvre. (Editions du Cerf.)

This is a new volume in the collection 'L'Eau Vive' which already includes works by the late Abbot Vonier and Caryll Houselander translated into French. Dom Georges Léfèbvre has previously written *La grace de la prière* and this volume might well be read as a sequel which seeks to penetrate nearer to the heart of the Christian life. The central truth of Christianity is that God is love and that he invites us to enter into the mystery of his love; this book examines how we may do that by prayer. Prayer is both a free gift of God's love and the result of our efforts and sacrifices; and so it is attended by both pain and happiness. It is a great mistake to imagine that those who reach a high state of prayer—the way of union, or illumination—have no further need of mortification. Perhaps the best thing about this book is that it makes that point clear and emphasizes the mystery of the cross which lies at the heart of the highest state of prayer.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

LA MESSE. By Romano Guardini. (Editions du Cerf.)

This volume, translated from the German by Pie Duployé, follows immediately in the series *Lex Orandi* on Father Boyer's *La Vie de la Liturgie*; it is less massive but no less learned or perceptive. Nor is it less welcome, since the subject matter is what we have heard before from Dr Guardini. The chapters of this book were compiled from instructions given to the faithful before Mass with a view to helping

them to take an active part and to wean them away from the habit of 'looking on'. The matter is as topical as it was over ten years ago when it was first produced in German. One could select numerous points for discussion; a few headings will suffice: silence as an activity—active listening—the altar table. This sort of instruction brings the Mass to life, everyday life. The three chapters on liturgical—and for that matter general prayer—difficulties deserve note. They afflict us all from time to time, and we can often help one another with them without being high-grade theologians; they are staleness, the desire for emotional satisfaction and the oppressive sense of our own sins. Dr Guardini's study of all these matters is most practical and helpful, and many of the chapters can be read in isolation for their own sakes, as can the methodical study, historical and theological, of the nature of the Mass, which occupies almost all the latter half of the book.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE PATRISTIC AGE CONCERNING MARY'S DEATH.

By Walter J. Burghardt, S.J. (Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland; 95 cents.)

This reprint from *Marian Studies* (Vol. VIII) is a collation of the evidence for and against the belief that our Lady died. It covers the first eight centuries. It is thorough, as was to be expected of the author, and comes down definitely on the positive side, i.e. that she did actually die. But only as a strongly felt opinion. It does not dispose of the question and those theologians (few, but not negligible) who for other reasons like to think that our Lady passed from earth to heaven without death will be grateful to Father Burghardt for having set out so clearly the weakness as well as the strength of the Patristic evidence.

His conclusion is that 'there emerges a widespread conviction of the early Church that our Lady died a natural death. . . . However, the nature of much of the evidence . . . is too fragile to sustain an apodictic conclusion on the theological significance of this conviction. But the conviction is there. More than that, the consistency of its liturgical expression and the uniformity of its homiletic articulation warrant the conclusion that it was conscious, abiding, and informed.' But whether, in nearly all the evidence provided, it is a conviction or an assumption is just the point at issue. Only when we have answered that can we consider whether it was conscious or informed.

G. M. CORR, O.S.M.

LE TRÔNE DE LA SAGESSE. By Louis Bouyer. (Editions du Cerf.)

Masterly is an accurate word for this book. It is a richly reflective long essay (296 pages) on the implications of all the data of revelation which can help us to understand the doctrine of the motherhood of

Mary. There is a breadth and depth of learning, biblical and theological, rarely met with in books about our Lady, and a facility and perspicacity in interpretation which speaks of a great and wide understanding of the import of the great biblical themes.

Perhaps the author's most impressive theme, the one most useful for an understanding of the author's mind throughout the book, is that humanity is recapitulated in Mary in a way analogical to the recapitulation in Christ. It is certainly a help in following his profound consideration of the great themes—Immaculate Conception, Virginity, Motherhood, The Second Eve, Relation to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Co-Redemption, Assumption. This book is in effect a Mariology, though not in text-book form, of a profound and substantial character comparable with anything that has yet appeared.

Breadth of view and critical appreciation of sources give the reader confidence, even where the author flatly contradicts a common theological opinion or interpretation (as on the nature of the sin of our first parents).

It is the first volume of a trilogy in which the author is to consider the whole economy of salvation, and this trilogy is to be followed by another, purely theological, with the theology of the Holy Ghost, of Christ, of the Father, considered in turn. To start such a vast theological work with a book on our Lady was an inspiration.

G. M. CORR, O.S.M.

THE RECOVERY OF UNITY: A Theological Approach. By E. L. Mascall. (Longmans; 25s.)

It is a matter for satisfaction that Dr Mascall has chosen to write a book on Reunion. The Ecumenical Movement is in the air; Reunion All Round is almost the Order of the Day. Cryptic hints of the 'great Church which is to be' fly off episcopal lips. Dr Mascall is uniquely qualified to discuss the subject. He is eminently well read in Catholic theology and most of his work is certainly within the pale of Catholic orthodoxy. At the same time he has shown that he is also deeply read in current Evangelical theology. To this he brings a deep sympathy and wish to be fair, shown in the large quotations, making the book something of a Catena, and a spiritual approach which lifts it out of mere polemics.

Dr Mascall is a theologian, and his book is written from that angle. It must be conceded that it is stiff reading, and his wide erudition makes demands on his readers. He insists that Christian Reunion must be considered primarily as a theological concern. Sociological or political factors have come to play their part in erecting barriers between Christians, but it is fallacious to believe that our divisions are basically

other than theological. Dr Mascall is afraid that efforts at 'Reunion' may sidetrack this vital approach and expend themselves on negotiations, in which each 'side' will consider how much of its inheritance it can throw overboard to meet the others' wishes. This not only lowers the whole idea of Reunion, but also deeply impoverishes the resultant life of the constituent bodies. Dr Mascall sees it as essential that all parties should delve below their superficial disagreements—or *agreements*. And this brings us to a point which he considers of the utmost importance—that the causes of Christian disunity lie as much in where Christians agree as where they disagree. And here we come to one of the major themes of his book: that both Catholicism and Protestantism have inherited, uncritically, many of the ideas of the decadent practices and philosophy of the late Middle Ages. He analyses with some care the Nominalist philosophy which was all that Luther knew, and shows how it inevitably led to his particular theory of Justification. Dr Mascall makes considerable use of Père Bouyer's book, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*.

The Catholic reader of the book will naturally turn with special interest to the last two chapters, 'The Church and the Papacy'. And he will possibly get a surprise. For Dr Mascall here shows himself a severe, if respectful, critic of the Roman Church and, particularly, of the Papacy. Two things seem especially to trouble him—he feels that there is some inconsistency between the Roman claim to preserve the Apostolic deposit of faith and its admitted development (yet did not St Irenaeus speak of a *depositum juvenescens*?). Secondly, he feels that the Roman Church has subordinated the sacramental to the authoritarian and jurisdictional aspect. While there are a number of secondary criticisms made of the reliability of the day-to-day teaching of the Church, his oft-repeated objection is that the Roman Church has become over-balanced. Dr Mascall has himself advanced in many instances the Catholic teaching—occasionally unconsciously slightly 'turned' perhaps by his acute mind—so that one feels that to a certain extent an impasse has been reached. Perhaps one could say on one point that the marriage difficulty advanced on page 228 is discussed by Dr Messenger in his book, *The Mystery of Sex and Marriage* (p. 167).

Yet in spite of this Dr Mascall can finish his book with the generous tribute that in spite of all the juridical structure of the Church, the sacramental life of the Body of Christ goes on, and nowhere else, save perhaps in Orthodox monasteries (*his* alternative), is the supernatural nature of the Christian religion so appreciated as in the Contemplative orders, underneath, in spite of, the juridical structure which is its protection. Dare one suggest?—because of the juridical structure.